

RELEASE IN
PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2012 5:13 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Ghalioun speech (close hold)

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----- Original Message -----

From: Irwin, Matthew T
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2012 04:53 AM
To: Hof, Frederic C; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Dibble, Elizabeth L; Walles, Jacob; Sullivan, Jacob J; 'fordrs58 [REDACTED]
 <fordrs58 [REDACTED] Miller, James N; NEA-Syria-DL; Hallett, Stephanie L; Djerassi, Alexander M
Subject: Ghalioun speech (close hold)

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Here's the SNC's official English translation of Ghalioun's intervention at today's Friends Group meeting, provided in advance as a favor with a request for strict secrecy. It's very, very good.

On minorities: A+ (heartfelt appeals directly to Christians, Alawis and Kurds).

On the transition plan: B+ (it's headlines only but good enough for FMs and hits our key point that the state and stability must be maintained).

On humanitarian issues: B+ (they call for corridors but otherwise thank the int'l community for all its help).

Here's the text...

Speech of Dr. Burhan Ghalioun, President of the Syrian National Council Friends of Syria Conference Tunis, February 24, 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen, Brothers and Sisters, Dear Friends:

I thank you for your participation in this Friends of Syria conference. I salute all the righteous souls of our martyrs and pay tribute to our great people, who have not stopped in their struggle to regain their rights, lost since the Assad family took power. We started a revolution of freedom and dignity in the heart of Damascus, Syria on March 15. Our revolution was peaceful, but the regime's response was atrocious. It bombed Lattakia from the sea; its soldiers slaughtered the people of Daraa; and armored vehicles moved into Hama and Homs, which is even now being pounded by heavy artillery shelling.

The humanitarian situation during this tragic time is not a secret. Today, we see the example of the Baba Amr neighborhood and cities in Syria, where the regime commits systematic murder and works to terrorize residents, break their will, and force them to surrender and submit to its will. Yet the Syrian people have not surrendered, nor will they give up. A free people was born in Syria, and it does not fear death, nor does it accept to bargain away its long-deprived rights or give up its sovereignty by any definition.

We, the people of Syria, applaud your solidarity with us and your commitment to the cause of our people, and we are proud of our friendship with you. We welcome any assistance you might offer, or means to protect our brothers and sisters who are struggling to end the rule of tyranny. But let me also be frank with you: We are here today to work together for the future of Syria and the Syrian people. There is no room for regional competition, nor is there room to move the Syrian issue from one international forum to another. Our goal is a free, independent, sovereign Syria, and

meeting the aspirations of the Syrian people is our objective. What is most desired by our people today is to, quite simply, transition to a system of government that is not based on force or under which citizens are terrorized and tortured. The Syrian people do not want a government that, rather than punishing corruption, revels in it. The Syrian people seek a government under which citizenship alone shall guarantee their rights and duties, rather than nepotism, favoritism, and personal loyalties.

What the Syrian people seek – all the Syrian people – is a government that knows the true meaning of accountability and responsibility. What the Syrian people seek is a government bound by the rule of law and under which all citizens of all segments of society are free and equal in their rights and national obligations. The Syrian people, all the Syrian people, want an end to the rule of a Mafia family and the establishment of forward-looking, democratic, civil state in this new era. A system of government under which no Syrian must give up his dignity and freedom to stay alive. A system of government under which all Syrians have equal opportunities, and can enjoy the fruits of their labor and talents, rather than seeing them go to the close relatives and aides of senior officials.

We in the Syrian National Council, and as representatives of the Syrian people, thank you for your help. We value your friendship. However, the key to the solution remains in the hands of Syrians. And I say to them: the revolution of our youth in Syria has brought us to this moment of truth. The time has come for us to assume our responsibilities and work together to rebuild the spirit of national unity and fraternity that the regime has torn apart through its violence and corruption.

Syria is our goal. Let me speak openly and honestly. The key to the solution is in our hands alone. I speak before you now as a Syrian Arab citizen who happened to be born a Muslim. The beliefs I hold do not affect my commitments as a citizen, nor do they provide me with a national or cultural identity any more so than they would a Kurdish Syrian or Assyrian or Armenian, or any other ethnicity from across the spectrum of Syria to which each of us may belong.

What is happening today in Syria has nothing to do with a conflict between a minority and a majority. Those who are guilty of violating people's honor and trampling on their rights, who kill their fellow countrymen and steal from them, have no religion or ethics, and are not of us. They have no humanity. And so I say to my fearful Alawite compatriots: You are my brothers and sisters, and your unique role in rebuilding the new Syria cannot be undertaken by anyone else, because it is a right you have earned through your historic struggle for Syria. No one has the right to hold you responsible for crimes committed by the Assad-Makhlouf Mafia. You are not responsible for the actions of corrupt dictators.

I say to my Christian brothers and sisters: Many of you left your historic Syria in the past in search of freedom and better opportunities. When you left, a dearly held part of Syria died. The new Syria is no longer merely a dream – it is within our reach, and we will work together to ensure that each Christian who needed to leave can return to the land of his or her forefathers.

The new Syria will not be the property of any sect, denomination, or group. Rather, it will be a homeland for all its equal citizens, a democratic civil state based on the rule of law and civil liberties in which our citizenship transcends any social, ethnic, or sectarian faction. The new Syria will be one to which Syrians will be proud to belong; a Syria in which any citizen has the right to seek the highest positions in government without regard to ethnic origin, religion, or gender.

And to my Kurdish brothers and sisters, I say: Syria belongs to us all. There is no contradiction between a Syria that returns to its Arab embrace and a Syria that respects your national identity and in which you are assured of equal rights before the law. The new Syria will have a decentralized government, thereby enabling local authorities. The people and land of the new Syria will remain united, and the new Syria will avail itself of every opportunity to celebrate the diversity that has enriched its long history. Your identity will be nationally recognized and respected, and your rights as citizens will be assured. You will play a significant role in rebuilding the Syria of our dreams, the Syria of which we have been dreaming for decades.

To all Syrians, I say: The Syrian National Council will not accept any form of political isolation, nor any form of discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, or gender. We reject any form of government that does not draw its

legitimacy from the will of people. For all those who fear what will happen as result of Assad's and his thieves' departure, I say: The Syrian National Council envisions a future Syria based on the rule of law and state institutions within a free, civil society that is founded in a prosperous, diverse, and creative nation. Syrians should never have to leave their country in search of freedom, opportunities, or a decent life.

And to all Syrians who fear that chaos or instability will substitute the rule of Assad's mafia and his supporters, I say that the solution is in our hands and the road ahead is clear:

- ☑ The popular Revolution and resistance will continue until Basher Al-Assad is ousted or a delegated authority takes over as per the Arab League Ministers' Action Plan.
- ☑ The formation of a "Presidential Council" composed of national leaders, and the formation of a transitional government of political, military, and technocratic figures who have not fought against the Revolution; a government that will manage the nation's affairs and maintains its structure and institutions, particularly military and civilian administration.
- ☑ The formation of Truth and Reconciliation Committee responsible for addressing the legal and psychological terrorism by the previous regime and preventing any sectarian or political reprisals. The committee will work to reconcile and restore the sense of nationalism and human values that have been lacking during this ordeal.
- ☑ At the end of the transitional phase, elections of members of the Constituents' Assembly will be held under the supervision of Arab and international monitors. The Constituents' Assembly will choose a new president, appoint a new government, and establish a constitution based on parliamentary, pluralistic, and democratic rule to ensure a civil state in Syria. Only when the Legislative Council holds its first session will we have a new life with a democratic parliament, with God's help.

Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends,

We sincerely hope that the assembly of this conference will be a turning point for the Syrian people's long-awaited and bitter struggle to restore their natural rights and freedoms from the bloody and corrupt military rule. The regime exploited the international community for stability and used humanitarian, patriotic, and noble slogans to discredit an entire nation and rob it of its resources while controlling its children's lives. The military dictatorship insulted individuality, humiliated the nation, and held its will in contempt, as it did to its culture, standing policy, history, and its foundation. For the past half-century, the military dictatorship has used control as a means of governance and violence. It has led to the bloodshed and abuse of individuals, including children, women, the youth, and the elderly without distinction, where thousands were imprisoned and thousands more were exiled. The Syrian people demand the following:

- ☑ First and foremost, the urgent provision of immediate relief, the declaration of disaster areas in Syria, and the establishment of humanitarian corridors to provide emergency assistance to Syrians. We demand that all women, children, and the wounded be evacuated from the besieged cities. Humanitarian and aid collection centers must be established in neighboring countries.
- ☑ Second, to secure and ensure freedom of action and movement for international relief and human rights organizations to help people in coping with the harsh conditions across the country.
- ☑ Third, to provide a means of protection for Syrian civilians and to remove all threats facing them, in order to create conditions that allow them to freely express their opinions and create an environment that helps foster self-determination.
- ☑ Fourth, to recognize the Syrian National Council and support its efforts in coordinating various parties involved in the Revolution within the framework of a national plan to accomplish change and oust the corrupt and tyrannical regime.

Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends,

Syria has a long history in the cradle of civilization and humanity. It is at the crossroads of many religions and cultures and remains the land of love, tolerance and peace. Thanks to the great sacrifices of her children, democratic forces, and the help of the free world, it will soon be the land of freedom and the rule of law, citizenship, volunteerism, and prosperity.

God bless the righteous heroes of liberty and peace. God's mercy and blessings.